A MUSICAL PRODIGY.

Playing the Piano Perfectly at Five Years of Age.

Little Elsa Breidt Astonishes Musicians by Her Remarkable Performances—How Her Genius Was Discovered by Her Mother.

Dressed in a light blue frock, a pretty straw hat and tiny boots, from the tops of which hung golden tassels, was gray-eyed Elsa Breidt, the five-year-old musical prodigy and daughter of Julius Breidt, of 2510 Cottage Grove avenue, says the Chicago Herald. She was ready to play for a party of musicians, and as she ran up to the piano in her home she laughed merrily at her mother, who was to assist her. Speaking in German, Mrs. Breidt asked the child to play something from Schumann. The child at once dashed into "The White Horseman," which she played in perfect time and tune. The execution of the little hands was marvelous, and as the child played piece after piece, finally closing her impromptu recital with a perfect little melody of her own composition, the musicians present wanted to catch her up in their arms and hug her. Then she played piano duets with her mother, and after a time Mr. Breidt, the watchmaker, came in, took down his old violin, put on a new string or two, and then father and daughter plunged into "The Boulanger March," the petite phenomenon playing a most perfect piano accompaniment to the air from the father's violin. The march finished, the father spoke of the "Ave Maria," and the child, without a word, began the introduction to the Bach-Gounod composition. Although it had been many weeks since father and child had played together, yet Elsa never missed a note or sounded a false one to the end of the difficult accompaniment. She played the music exactly as it is written and with wonderful tact and expression.

Little Elsa has been petted by Sherwood and Lilly Lehmann, raved over by D'Albert and marveled at by all who have seen and heard her. Only once or twice has she appeared in public, playing once for a class of pupils from one of the musical colleges and again at one of Mr. Sherwood's recitals. The latter often visits her at her humble home, and D'Albert wants her to come at once to his home in Germany and receive a thorough musical education.

"When Elsa was two years old, I one day found her singing the air I was playing at the piano," said her mother. "I tried another and found that with little effort she could follow any air. When she was large enough to sit alone on the piano stool I would let her strike the keys, and she immediately learned to play chords, and before she was three years of age could carry parts of airs correctly. When three and a half years old she was playing accompaniments to her father's violin, and very soon learned to play the accompaniment to the 'Ave Maria' which you have just heard. Then I noticed if I played sentimental or lively music it affected her strangely. In fact, we can not play pathetic airs, as the tears come to her eyes and she is much agitated. She is strong and healthy and has never been sick a day. She is also very full of life, and enjoys herself much as other children do, but if anybody is playing, wherever she is, she listens with mouth, eyes and ears wide open. She will play any ordinary composition almost absolutely correct after having heard it once.

"We never have to play a piece more than twice for her to learn it," said Mrs. Breidt. "While she is taking every note by ear she also closely watches the hands of the player. She does not seem to care for dance music. We have not permitted her to practice much this summer on account of the heat, and we never force her to do any thing.

"It has been about six months since she began to compose or improvise," continued the mother. "One day there was a terrible rain and thunder-storm, and when it was over she went to the piano and played the wildest sort of an air, which she made up. She will climb on to the stool and begin singing softly some measure or strain that has come into her head, and after humming it over several times she plays it. That's the way she composes her pieces."

Julius Breidt is a fine-looking German, forty-three years old. He has lived in this city since he was five years old, and has been a watchmaker and jeweler since he was fourteen. Six years ago he married Miss Bertha Schoenfeld, a comely German girl, and on May 28, 1885, Elsa, the little musical genius, was born. She is their only child.

A Novel Wedding Journey.

A novel method of spending a honeymoon has recently been added to the list of unique wedding journeys in coaches, on house-boats or yachts. A young Viennese bridegroom procured for the trip a new furniture van with three horses and a driver. The interior he fitted up in a most daintily luxuriant way with every comfort and convenience dear to the feminine heart. Just how the light was supplied is not easy to conjecture, for the ordinary furniture van has no windows. Possibly electricity may have diffused its soft radiance from depending globes of roseate hue, or the isolated lovers may have lived only in the soft light of each other's eyes. The cooking problem would also arise to any one but lovers, but whether the driver united the culinary art with that of handling the reins, or whether the young woman herself was a cooking-school graduate is not known. Any way, the pair expect to spend a two months' honeymoon at a cost of little more than $100 a month, rambling about the country in their own private conveyance, with buffet accommodations.

Curious Cause of Death.

A school-girl in France died recently from a curious cause. At the distribution of prizes she obtained a laurel wreath colored green. She thoughtlessly put the painted leaves in her mouth and died afterward from the effect of the poison.

INTELLIGENT RATS.

They Open Olive Oil Bottles and Help Themselves Lavishly.

"I want you to look at that bottle," said a druggist to a Doylestown (Pa.) Democrat reporter the other day. The bottle held up for inspection contained a half-pint of olive oil—its full capacity—and had been manufactured with an unusually narrow neck, measuring, perhaps, four inches in length.

"What's the matter with it?" asked the customer.

"There's nothing the matter with the bottle, but do you see where that cork is?"

"Yes, it's about half-way down the neck."

"Well, that's what there is peculiar about it, and here's another," continued the druggist, producing a second bottle, "with the cork pushed almost into the oil. Now, how do you suppose those corks got into that position?"

"Somebody pushed them down, of course."

"No, sir; I know you will never guess, so I may as well tell you. Those corks were forced down the necks of the bottles by rats. That may sound pretty stiff when you consider that a rat's leg is scarcely long enough to reach down to where that cork is, but it's a fact. We found our olive oil bottles opened and the contents spilled around the cellar, and it was a long time before we caught on to how it was done. It was a picnic for the rats. They would go over to the grocery store across the street, fill up on cheese, and when they felt the need of a laxative come into our cellar and take a dose of oil. One of them even moved the lid off a big box containing bottles of oil packed in straw, and had a bottle half open when we discovered him. A stone weighing about ten pounds had been placed on the lid of the box, but he managed to get it out of the way. You will notice these bottles were originally bound with husk, and the cork securely tied down and then covered with bladder. The rats first gnaw off the bladder cap and then work on the cork until it is about a quarter of an inch thick. Then begins the mysterious work of forcing them into the oil. After the cork is out of the way they overturn the bottle and proceed to enjoy the contents."

The customer went down cellar with the proprietor, saw the box referred to and inspected the bottle that had been operated upon. Putting a pencil into the neck, it was discovered considerable strength would have to be expended in order that the cork might be moved. How the rodents accomplish it remains a mystery.

WAS ALL BUSINESS.

Madam Wanted Her Tooth Pulled Without Any Charge for Sympathy.

She was a mature woman, with high cheek bones, a dappled face and red hair, says the Chicago Herald. Flinging aside her bonnet she got up into the dentist's chair, leaned her head back, opened her mouth, and pointed to a tooth on the lower jaw.

"I wish you'd see what is the matter with that grinder," she said.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the dentist, in a sympathetic tone. "Has it been hurting you long?"

"Who said it had been hurting me?"

"Beg pardon, ma'am. I inferred—"

"Well, you don't need to infer any thing. If you're ready to look at that grinder, doctor, I'm ready to open my mouth again." And she opened it.

"The tooth, madam," he said, after a brief examination, "is a mere shell. I regret—"

"What occasion is there for you to regret any thing? Whose grinder is it?"

"I was going to say it is too late to save the tooth. It is too far gone. If it's troubling you any it will have to come out."

"Well, that's what I'm here for."

"It will be hard to get hold of with the forceps and I am sorry to say it will hurt—"

"Does it hurt you to pull a customer's tooth?" she demanded.

"Of course not, but—"

"Well, then, you needn't feel sorry. I am here on business. I don't need any sympathy. Yank it out."

The thoroughly-humbled tooth artist wasted no more words. He produced a pair of ugly-looking forceps and extracted the offending molar without delay.

"What's your bill?" inquired the woman.

"Fifty cents."

"That's the regular price, is it? You're not charging any thing for sympathy?"

"It is the regular price, madam."

"Here's the money. Good-day!"

After she had gone out of his office the dentist went and sat down by the front window to rest. "If I had that woman's nerve," he said to himself, as he watched her striding down the street, "I could be an alderman and own a whole ward in less than three months."

Four Very Queer Pigs.

William Hoffman, of Sebewaing, Pa., has four pigs that beat any thing ever seen in that locality. One has no trace of hind legs, another has no hoofs, but claws take the place of the generally thought necessary porcine appendix, and the two others have claws and toes and pretty nearly every thing else that pigs can very handily get along without.

Ear-Rings in All Ages.

The strange fashion of mutilating and adorning the human ear has been practiced and has been in vogue all over the world. It has especially enjoyed great favor among the Orientals, and by Persians, Babylonians, Lydians, Lybians and Carthagenians the ear-ring was worn as commonly by men as by women.

A Farm in His Boot.

It is not often that grain is found to grow in a man's boots, but such a case is reported. A farmer brought a pair of boots to a Guelph, Ont., cobbler to be repaired. When the shoemaker commenced operations on them he found grain growing to the length of several inches. Such is certainly a curiosity.